

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 6278

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SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN UNDERSECRETARY'S MEETINGS WITH SOVIET DEPUTY
FOREIGN MINISTER (NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 1)

REF: MOSCOW 19001

1. WE RECEIVED A COMPLETE READOUT ON STOLTENBERG'S VISIT DECEMBER 8 WHICH LARGELY COINCIDES WITH KRANE'S REPORT TO EMBASSY MOSCOW (REFTEL). OUR SOURCE WAS DAGFINN STENSETH, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WHO ACCOMPANIED STOLTENBERG ON HIS TALKS AND IS ONE OF NORWAY'S TOP SOVIET EXPERTS. MINOR ADDITIONS OR CLARIFICATIONS ARE NOTED BELOW. FULL MEMCON POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT AND MOSCOW.

2. SVALBARD: STENSETH SAID THAT ZEMSKOV HAD REPEATEDLY STRESSED THE SOVIETS' VIEW THAT QUOTE CERTAIN CIRCLES UNQUOTE IN NORWAY WERE TRYING TO STIR UP TROUBLE BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE USSR OVER SVALBARD. THESE "CIRCLES" WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT NORWEGIAN "PRESS CAMPAIGN" ABOUT SOVIET ACTIVITIES ON SVALBARD, WHICH CAM-
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PAIGN, ZEMSKOV ALLEGED, AMOUNTED TO AN ATTEMPT TO PRESSURE THE SOV-

IETS. THESE SAME "CIRCLES" WERE TRYING TO ACQUIRE GREATER RIGHTS FOR NORWAY ON SVALBARD WHILE LIMITING THE RIGHTS OF OTHER TREATY PARTIES, INCLUDING THE USSR, ON SVALBARD. IT WAS THE SOVIETS' IMPRESSION, ZEMSKOV CONTINUED, THAT "THESE SAME CIRCLES" WANTED TO REVISE THE DEMILITARIZATION PROVISION OF THE TREATY (AND HERE HE CITED, IN ADDITION TO NORWEGIAN NAVAL AND AIRCRAFT VISITS AND ELIASSEN'S ARTICLE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATO SCLANT COMMAND IN 1951--ALL POINTS MADE BY THE IZVESTIA ARTICLE OF NOVEMBER 25, OSLO 6052). ACCORDING TO STENSETH, ZEMSKOV EXPLICITLY STATED THAT THESE ACTIVITIES CONTRAVENE THE SVALBARD TREATY, A VIEW WHICH THE NORWEGIANS REJECTED.

3. STENSETH CONFIRMED THAT ZEMSKOV HAD MADE A CLAIM FOR "SPECIAL INTERESTS" IN THE SVALBARD AREA, AND CITED THE 1947 STORTING RESOLUTION AS EVIDENCE THAT THE GON, TOO, ACCEPTED THE SOVIETS' "SPECIAL INTEREST." HERE STENSETH'S ACCOUNT IS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FROM KRANE'S FOR ACCORDING TO STENSETH'S RECORD, ZEMSKOV REFERRED TO "SPECIAL INTERESTS" THOUGH THE 1947 RESOLUTION REFERS TO "SPECIAL ECONOMIC INTERESTS." STENSETH DOUBTED ZEMSKOV'S OMISSION OF THE WORD "ECONOMIC" WAS UNINTENTIONAL.

4. ACCORDING TO STENSETH, ZEMSKOV'S PRESENTATION ON THE NORWEGIAN PRESS (PARA 9 REFTTEL) WAS VERY TOUGH. ZEMSKOV STATED THAT THERE WAS NO PRESS IN EUROPE WHICH WAS CURRENTLY MORE ANTI-SOVIET THAN NORWAY'S. HE STATED FURTHER THAT AUTHORITIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE FOUND WAYS TO PREVENT THEIR PRESS FROM DISTORTING OFFICIAL RELATIONS.

5. BOUNDARY TALKS: STENSETH NOTED THAT STOLTENBERG HAD MADE A GENERAL STATEMENT THAT IT WAS TIME FOR BOTH SIDES TO TRY TO SHOW SOME REASONABLENESS AND FLEXIBILITY IN THE NEXT ROUND OF BOUNDARY TALKS. ZEMSKOV HAD MADE NO REPLY TO THIS STATEMENT.

6. COMMENT: THE NORWEGIANS PURPORT TO BE PLEASED WITH THE STOLTENBERG VISIT, THOUGH ONE IS HARD PRESSED TO KNOW WHY. THEY GOT PRECIOUS LITTLE FROM THE SOVIETS BEYOND GOOD ATMOSPHERICS AND THE STANDARD RECITALS OF SOVIET GOODWILL ON MOST ISSUES. ON THE CONCRETE ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO NORWAY--SVALBARD AND NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY THERE, THE BOUNDARY, AND THE GROMYKO VISIT--THE SOVIETS WERE EITHER EVASIVE OR INTRACTIBLE. STOLTEN-
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BERG, AN AMBITIOUS MEMBER OF THE LABOR PARTY'S LEFT WING, NO DOUBT NEEDS TO PUT A FINE GLOSS ON THE VISIT TO INCREASE HIS STATURE DOMESTICALLY. STENSETH, AN EXPERIENCED SOVIETOLOGIST, WAS LESS THAN TRANSPORTED BY THE VISIT'S OUTCOME.

7. LIKE MOSCOW, WE BELIEVE THE SOVIETS' OBJECTIVE ON SVALBARD IS TO DEFLECT ANY TALK OF "ROLLING BACK" CURRENT SOVIET PRACTICES THERE AND TO MAKE THESE ACTIVITIES INSTEAD THE BASE FROM WHICH

TO MEASURE FUTURE SOVIET ACTIVITIES, THEREBY PRECLUDING NORWAY
--OR OTHER TREATY PARTIES--FROM CONSIDERING THE TREATY ITSELF
AS THE APPROPRIATE YARDSTICK OF SOVIET BEHAVIOR. AT THE SAME
TIME, WE WOULD IMAGINE THAT THE SOVIETS WILL PLAY THE "SPECIAL
INTERESTS" THEME TO THE NORWEGIANS, IN HOPES OF INDUCING THE
GON INTO SOME BILATERAL ARRANGEMENT FOR NORTHERN ISSUES. FOR THE
TIME BEING AT LEAST, THE GON HAS REJECTED THESE BLANDISHMENTS.
ANDERS

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